

North Carolina Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure, NCBRTL

2019-2020 Year-end Summary Report

During 2019-2020 NCBRTL as all entities faced the pandemic, Recreational Therapy faced impacts on internships and testing site closures. NCBRTL follows national certification board's internship standards due to out of state internships and an alternative Internship guide was developed. This guide set parameters for interrupted internships to be completed at alternative sites or remotely. North Carolina Recreational Therapy Educators adopted a position paper on the interrupted Internships so that the students met the legal requirements within Chapter 90C internship standards. The educators included representatives from NCBRTL during this development to ensure standards were met. This was viewed as a positive movement for the best practices within the profession.

NCBRTL made allowances for licensee extensions of 90 Days to submit all fees and continuing education documents upon request. As of June 30th, 19 licensees made this request and 5 have already completed the requirements. This will continue to be offered as long as needed.

The Records Manager hired to separate financial duties, maintain hard files and receive mailed items resigned and a new LRT was hired to perform these duties. This arrangement continues to work well.

Three new Board members Wendy Chavez and Tina Pilkington, both public members were appointed for three year terms (2022) and Dr. Russ Greenfield, the physician member was appointed as well, however Dr Greenfield's was for two years ending in 2021.

Rules: NCBRTL made a few updates to Rules in Fall 2019. Clarification was outlined to assist in the understanding of what the "grace period" for renewal due dates meant. The fees listed for Military Applicants were removed. Allowances were made for licensees to request and pay for Inactive status for up to five years were given. The Reinstatement Period was extended to sixty days for expired licensees to return without complete re-application.

NCBRTL issued new 143 licenses to applicants

Out of State applicants 15 this year.

As well, as 17 Inactive Status Requests, ! return to active from Inactive

Issued 13 Reinstatements (___% increase)

Issued 6 Reentries (past Reinstatement period)

Issued 2 Denials

LRT requests reasons

-one could not show current exam passage proof

- one did not have Internship Course documented on Official transcript

Total Licensees as of June 30, 2019

New issue LRT 143

New issue LRTA 6

Inactive Status 17

Reinstatements 13

Reentries 6

New Licensees by NC School

ECU 40

UNCG 33

UNCW 21

WCU 14
WSSU 7
Catawba 6
Mt Olive 2
Out of State Schools 15
Two-year NC Schools (Assistant level)
WPPC 1
PCC 5 (Program ended)

Licenses issued by month

July 2019 19
Aug 2019 21
Sept 2019 11
Oct 2019 14
Nov 2019 9
Dec 2019 4
Jan 2020 20
Feb 2020 14
Mar 2020 7
Apr 2020 2
May 2020 12
June 2020 12

NCBRTL On average, NCBRTL approved 11.9 licenses per month, the larger months being, August (21), January (20) viewed as a result due to completion of internships and exam offering dates. July (19), October (14) and February (14) being the next larger months. The least received in April (2) and December (4).

Given the pandemic, interrupted internships and closed testing sites, there was a slight drop from last year however only a slight dip of 2.7% decrease. The amount of incomplete applications that are currently pending, the numbers are anticipated to continue to rise as testing sites reopen.

The required Compliance and Ethics Training continues to assist licensees in understanding the Chapter 90C, 21 NCAC 65 Rules, and annual requirements. NCBRTL offers the required training for first year licensees. Registration for existing licensees is open for continuing education credit and increased knowledge of the law and requirements. The NCBRTL Compliance and Ethics Training is offered three times at three locations (Winston Salem, Durham, and Mt Olive) across the state annually. One session was offered also by webinar; it was received well and had high participation. The Board is currently working on plans to offer the training online at all sessions. NCBTL will also hold a session upon request if there are at least 30 participants.

Licenseses attended:

August 2019, University of Mt Olive 53
November 2019, Duke Regional Hospital 52
March 2020, Wake Forest Healthcare, WS 49

Disciplinary Actions take in 2019-2020

Compliance Issues:

Eight licensees missed Due Dates, they were placed on Probation for the amount of time they practiced with expired license, required to attend Compliance and Ethics Training, The expired licensees completed required reinstatement application and submitted missed items that were due. Licenses were reinstated to all eight licensees with this issue.

NCBRTL issued two letters of Notification to individuals reportedly practicing or using credential prior to being licensed. One posted on Facebook and the other claimed on email signature. New graduates are often given notice not to use national credential until state licensed even though they have passed exam.

Issued Four Letters of Education about NC RT License law to agencies advertising for RTs without indicating state licensure requirement.

Contacted six agencies by phone to discuss position postings. Postings are misstated and don't include state licensure requirement, they are stated so that would allow for violations of the state law. All agencies responded by changing their postings or explained they advertised out of a central office nationwide but were aware of state laws. This is an often occurrence due to national postings to states that accept national certification only. Some agencies do not understand the difference of "Activities" position that do not require licensure and Recreational Therapy position that do.

Compliance to Attendance to Compliance and Ethics Training during first year continues to be somewhat an issue. NCBRTL educates the new licensees to this requirement by letter enclosed in License packet and a "What To Do Now That You Are Licensed" flyer as well as three email announcements prior to each training. NCBRTL continues to review.

Misconduct:

Unsubstantiated Report investigated. No unfounded reports taken this year.

Misconduct:

Reports of misconduct during the 2019-2020 year all included situations involving supervision of Interns. Students were placed in agencies under RT Supervisors who had allowed their licenses to expire. NCBRTL reviews these a problematic for the agency internship supervisor with the expired license but also the university supervisor who approves the placement.

-One expired LRT supervised an intern in a federal facility so no action was taken for federal facilities are exempt however asked that the LRT attend Compliance and Ethics Training as well as the Internship training. University Supervisory was required to attend Compliance and Ethics Training, internship Training and Internship Manual and policy development to reflect proper supervisory methods and license verification.

-Two students completed internships under expired LRT where direct supervision had actually occurred under a wellness coordinator with no RT education or credentials. The University Supervisor was placed on

probation and Internship Supervision was removed for a semester since this was second occurrence. NCBRTL required policy and internship manual changes to reflect proper supervisory methods and license verification.

- One LRT left the position during an active internship for two assistant level students with no plan of action for the intern's supervision. The University Supervisor immediately fold alternative placement for the students. LRT was disciplined for unethical behavior of not ensuring the beneficence of the student interns.

- Two students were placed in agency to complete interrupted internship under an agency supervisor with an expired license.

NCBRTL has online verification as well as printable licenses through the website for validation of licenses. NCBRTL allows licensees to renew and/or pay maintenance Fees up to six months in advance to avoid this occurrence. The Board is currently working on Internship Manual Development Training to assist in avoiding this situation.

Future Goals and Plans

NCBRTL will be offering Compliance and Ethics Training through Zoom webinars due to limitations of groups and pandemic standards. NCBRTL continues to Review how best to educate licensees to compliance.

NCBRTL will also review the Internship Supervisor Training and place to offer internship manual development training. NCBRTL plans to complete these training modules for Recreational Therapy Internship agencies to assist in the development of more consistent internship programs and manual development across the state.

NCBRTL updated the website to improve functionality and allow for additional option for online payments, ability to upload required documents and ease of use. Response has decreased "mailing" of hard copy document issues and increased efficiency and speed of license approvals. The improved functionality has increased and ease of online Renewals as well. These efforts were extremely beneficial and timely during the pandemic. NCBRTL never had to cease operations throughout any of the phases of State of Emergencies. NCBRTL was able to allow the continuation of healthcare workforce throughout the pandemic.